

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY SUVA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY PRIORITY

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY

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LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDIP, FJ

SUBJECT: CREDENTIALS PRESENTATION AND WASHINGTON VISIT
OF AMBASSADOR VUNIBOBO.

REF: A.USUN 4664

STATE 264309

1. SUMMARY - BERENADO VUNIBOBO, FIJIAN AMBASSADOR TO
US AND UN (RESIDENT IN NEW YORK) PRESENTED CREDENTIALS
ON NOVEMBER 18. FOLLOWING CREDENTIALS CEREMONY, VUNIBOBO
CALLED ON AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND AMBASSADORS,
UNDERSECRETARY HABIB, EA DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY EDMOND
AND EA/ANP OFFICERS. IN DEPARTMENT MEETINGS, VUNIBOBO

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DISCUSSED FIJIAN INTEREST IN CLOSE RELATIONS WITH US;

HIS FEELING THAT US WAS BEGINNING TO PAY MORE ATTENTION TO SOUTH PACIFIC AND FIJI, FIJIAN INTEREST IN LOS MATTERS AND HIS GOVERNMENTS INTENTION TO MAINTAIN INDEPENDENT APPROACH TO UN MATTERS, JUDGING ISSUES ON MERITS RATHER THAN AS PART OF A BLOC. HE ASKED US POSITION ON ADMISSION WESTERN SAMOA TO UN AND WAS TOLD US WOULD COSPONSOR REQUEST. HE SAID FIJI WOULD NOT SUPPORT UN RESOLUTION ON GUAM WHICH WAS UNACCEPTABLE TO US, AND REQUESTED US SUPPORT FOR HIS CANDIDACY FOR PRESIDENCY OF COMITE OF 24. HE MENTIONED THAT USSR HAS REQUESTED

ESTABLISHMENT OF MISSION IN SUVA BUT THAT GOF WAS NOT EXPECTED TO AGREE SOON. END SUMMARY.

2. BERENADO VUNIBOBO, FIJIAN AMBASSADOR TO US AND UN, VISITED WASHINGTON NOVEMBER 18 TO PRESENT CREDENTIALS TO PRESIDENT. WHILE IN WASHINGTON, VUNIBOBO CALLED ON AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND AMBASSADORS AND MET UNDER-SECRETARY HABIB AND EA DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY EDMOND.

3. IN MEETING WITH UNDERSECRETARY HABIB, VUNIBOBO STRESSED THAT GOF INTENDED TO LOOK AT UN ISSUES ON THEIR MERITS, EVEN THOUGH THIS RESULTED IN THIRD WORLD CRITICISM. HABIB SAID HE HAD DISCUSSED THIS MATTER WITH PM MARA AND WE APPRECIATED FIJI'S ATTITUDE AND ITS CONSEQUENT SUPPORT ON A NUMBER OF UN ISSUES IN PAST. HABIB RAISED UPCOMING GUAM RESOLUTION, POINTING OUT OUR CONCERN OVER LANGUAGE REGARDING US MILITARY BASES AND THAT GUAMANIAN DO NOT DESIRE CHANGE IN SITUATION. HE ADDED THAT PURPOSE OF RESOLUTION WAS ATTEMPT EMBARASS US RATHER THAN REAL CONCERN OVER WELFARE GUAMANIAN. VUNIBOBO SAID FIJI WOULD NOT SUPPORT RESOLUTION WHICH WAS UNACCEPTABLE TO US.

4. VUNIBOBO MENTIONED HE HOPED TO BECOME PRESIDENT OF COMMITTEE OF 24 AND ASKED OUR SUPPORT. HABIB PROMISED TO LOOK INTO THE MATTER. VUNIBOBO EXPRESSED NEGATIVE VIEW CURRENT ACTIVITIES OF COMMITTEE, STATING "WHEN I SEE SOME OF

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THE PEOPLE ON THE COMMITTEE OF 24, I SHUDDER".

5. HABIB NOTED US HAS BECOME MORE INTERESTED IN SOUTH PACIFIC REGION AND FIJI AND THAT EA DEPASSTSEC EDMOND HAD VISITED AREA RECENTLY AND ATTENDED SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION MEETING.

6. VUNIBOBO SAID THAT SEVERAL MONTHS AGO HE HAD RECEIVED

AND FORWARDED TO SUVA REQUEST FROM SOVIETS TO OPEN MISSION IN SUVA. HE SAID GOF WAS "NOT KEEN" ON SOVIET MISSION AND FELT EARLY ASSENT TO ESTABLISHMENT OF MISSION WOULD NOT BE FORTHCOMING.

7. VUNIBOBO STATED HE HOPED TO VISIT WASHINGTON EVERY MONTH AFTER CLOSE OF UNGA. HABIB WELCOMED MORE FREQUENT CONTACT AND ENCOURAGED VWNIBOBO TO VISIT AS FREQUENTLY AS POSSIBLE.

8. IN MEETING WITH EDMOND, VUNIBOBO IN ADDITION TO MATTERS DISCUSSED WITH HABIB STATED HIS FEELINGS, AND

THAT OF PM MARA THAT US WAS NOW PAYING MORE ATTENTION TO REGION, WHIC GOF WELCOMED.

9. EDMOND SAID WE PLANNED TO SEND OFFICIALS TO SOUTH PACIFIC TO DISCUSS POSSIBILITIES OF VERY MODEST ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IN REGION. EDMOND STRESSED MOST ASSISTANCE WOULD GO TO SMALLER, POORER NATIONS SUCH AS TONGA, WESTERN SAMOA AND EVENTUALLY PERHAPS GILBERT ISLAND, BUT THAT WE WOULD BE CONSULTING GOF. EDMOND AND VUNIBOBO DISCUSSED PEACE CORPS ACTIVITIES, WITH EDMOND PROMISING LOOK INTO VUNIBOBO'S SUGGESTION THAT MORE TECHNICALLY QUALIFIED VOLUNTEERS, OR ENGINEERS, AGRICULTURALISTS, ETC, BE RECRUITED FOR SERVICE IN FIJI.

10. IN RESPONSE TO VUNIBOBO'S REQUEST, EDMOND PROMISED LOOK INTO POSSIBILITY US SUPPORT FOR UNDAT TEAM NOW BASED IN SUVA, WHICH MAY BE REDUCED DUE UN FUNDING PROBLEMS.

11. VUNIBOBO EXPRESSED GOF HOPES THAT LOS CONFERENCE
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WOULD REACH EARLY AGREEMENT. HE REQUESTED US TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN DRAWING OF BOUNDARIES. EDMOND SAID HE HOPED FIJI LOS DELEGATION WOULD REMAIN IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH USDEL AND WE WOULD CONSIDER REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE AT PROPER TIME.

12. COMMENT - VUNIBOBO APPEARED VERY PLEASED WITH HIS VISIT, CREDENTIALS PRESENTATION, AND DISCUSSIONS IN DEPARTMENT. HE AGREED WITH HABIB AND EDMOND THAT OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS ARE GOOD AND BECOMING CLOSER AS THE US AND FIJI HAVE MORE BILATERAL CONTACTS. VUNIBOBO IS SENSITIVE MAN WHO APPRECIATES THE TIME UUN OFFICERS HAVE SPENT WITH HIM. KISSINGER

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